

COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN FOR BRISTOL BAY

Commercial Fishermen Applaud EPA for Beginning Process to Protect Bristol Bay

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2014

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ANCHORAGE, AK -Today, the EPA announced it has decided to proceed under its Clean Water Act section 404(c) regulations to review the potential adverse impacts of mining the Pebble desposit in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

Katherine Carscallen, Sustainability Director for the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, made the following statement regarding today's announcement.

"Though Bristol Bay supports a \$1.5 billion commercial fishery and 14,000 jobs in total, our commercial fishermen have lived for a decade under a cloud of economic uncertainty created by the prospect of large-scale mining development in Bristol Bay. Today's announcement from the EPA shows that the clouds over Bristol Bay beginning to move. The EPA has clearly listened to our voices, and we are pleased they are responding to the request for Clean Water Act protections we made four years ago. There are still many steps in the process before the threat of building mines like Pebble in Bristol Bay is fully put to rest, but we are pleased this first and necessary step has been taken."

Today's announcement comes after the EPA released its final Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment last month. The three-year scientific assessment found that even without accident, mines like the proposed Pebble project could destroy up to 5,350 acres of the wetlands, lakes, and ponds that support Bristol Bay's world-class salmon fishery and up to 94 miles of salmon-spawning streams. Four years ago, commercial fishermen joined Alaska Native tribes and organizations, sportsmen, and others in requesting EPA action in Bristol Bay.

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Sportsmen Pleased with Decision to put Clean Water Act into Action in Bristol Bay

Provisions within the Act Could Halt Pebble Mine in the Heart of Wild Alaska

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2014

CONTACT:

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Tim Bristol, Director, TU's Alaska Program, (907) 321-3291

Rob Masonis, Vice president for Western Conservation, TU, (206) 491-9016

Steve Moyer, Vice president for Government Affairs, TU (703) 284-9406

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Trout Unlimited today congratulated the Environmental Protection Agency for putting the Clean Water Act into action and potentially halting the infamous Pebble Mine in the headwaters of Alaska's storied Bristol Bay watershed.

"It is difficult to overstate the significance of this announcement. If the EPA follows the science and follows through on this, it will rank as one of the most significant conservation achievements of the past 50 years," said Trout Unlimited president and CEO, Chris Wood. "This is one of the few places left on earth where nature works as it should, and it's a breadbasket for the world, supplying literally hundreds of thousands of people with wild salmon."

By putting into action Section 404 (c) of the Clean Water Act, the EPA is starting a process that will determine if large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed of southwest Alaska, specifically the Pebble deposit, can co-exist with the area's renewable natural resources, most importantly the waters that provide the spawning and rearing habitat for the world's largest sockeye salmon, as well as trophy rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, Arctic grayling and four other Pacific salmon species.

An EPA watershed report produced last year makes it clear that mining in this area would damage vital salmon habitat and, in the event of spills or accidents, put that habitat in imminent danger in perpetuity. By putting the process outlined in the Clean Water Act into play, the EPA is setting a very high—but reasonable and appropriate—bar for Pebble Mine to get over and prove there won't be impacts to water quality and the region's irreplaceable fishery.

"This is a very proactive and thoughtful decision on the part of the EPA, and we at Trout

Unlimited join with the millions of sportsmen and women across America in congratulating Administrator McCarthy for taking this important step,” said Steve Moyer, vice president for government affairs. “This issue has been our top conservation issue for nearly a decade, and our volunteers from all over the country have worked very hard to get to this point. We’re very pleased that the EPA has heard our voices, and we are grateful that it is translating the desires of millions of anglers into action.”

Bristol Bay’s salmon provide upwards of 14,000 jobs in Alaska and the Northwest every single year, and about half of the world’s annual sockeye salmon harvest comes from this region. Additionally, this area of Alaska is known for its unparalleled sportfishing—it’s probably the best place in North America to catch rainbow trout that will stretch a tape to 30 inches or more.

“This is the best place in the world to fish for salmon and trout, period,” said Tim Bristol, director of TU’s Alaska Program. “Sportsmen and women from Alaska and all over the United States have led the charge against Pebble Mine and for the protection of Bristol Bay’s salmon and trout for a long time. To see the process put in place that could protect thousands of long-term jobs in the commercial fishing industry and the opportunity for coming generations to fish for salmon and trout in Alaska is very gratifying. While we won’t know the outcome of this process for some time, it’s clear the EPA is listening to anglers, hunters and the people of Bristol Bay. I hope sportsmen and women all over America will join me in applauding the EPA for taking this bold step.”

Trout Unlimited is the nation’s oldest and largest coldwater fisheries conservation organization dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America’s trout and salmon and their watersheds. Follow TU on Facebook and Twitter, and visit us online at tu.org or at savebristolbay.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2014

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Statement regarding the EPA beginning the process to protect Bristol Bay fishery

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) President and Chief Executive Officer Jason Metrokin has released the following statement in response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announcement that they are beginning a process under the Clean Water Act to protect the Bristol Bay fishery from the potential destructive impacts of the proposed Pebble mine:

"Bristol Bay Native Corporation appreciates that EPA will identify appropriate options to protect Bristol Bay from the risks Pebble poses. While BBNC supports responsible development, including mining, the science has shown that the proposed Pebble mine presents unacceptable risks to Bristol Bay salmon, people and existing economies. BBNC shareholders and area residents overwhelmingly agree. We will continue to focus on ending the threat of the proposed Pebble mine and on creating other appropriate economic opportunities and jobs."

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Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) is a responsible Alaska Native investment corporation dedicated to the mission of "Enriching Our Native Way of Life." Established through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), BBNC works to ensure the continuation of the life and culture of its over 9,400 shareholders – the Eskimo, Indian and Aleut Natives of Southwest Alaska's Bristol Bay region.

PRESS RELEASE



Bristol Bay United: EPA announcement is an appropriate and measured step to protect Bristol Bay

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2014

CONTACT: Shoren Brown, 202-674-2380; shoren@bristolbayunited.com

ANCHORAGE, AK – Today, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it would begin a process under section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay from harmful mining development. Shoren Brown, Executive Director of Bristol Bay United, issued the following statement in support of the EPA's decision to use the Clean Water Act in Bristol Bay:

"The EPA's announcement that it is formally evaluating options to protect Bristol Bay from the risks associated with mining the Pebble deposit is welcome news for Bristol Bay. What is clear from the EPA's scientific assessment is that mines like Pebble unacceptably threaten the habitat and communities that make Bristol Bay the world's largest wild salmon fishery, a destination for sportsmen everywhere, and the home to subsistence cultures for millennia. EPA's announcement is an appropriate and measured step to protect this extraordinary place and we trust the agency will follow the science as it makes its final determination.

"The people of Bristol Bay have been coping with the economic and social uncertainty posed by the potential development of a mine like Pebble for the last decade. We need to move past this threat and continue creating economic growth and opportunities for the region consistent with the world-class fishery that already exists."

Bristol Bay United is an unprecedented coalition of Alaska Natives, commercial fishing industry members, and sport-fishing interests who are unified in opposition to the proposed Pebble Mine.

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**United Tribes of Bristol Bay Applauds EPA Decision to Initiate
Clean Water Act Protections for Bristol Bay**

For Immediate Release:

Date: February 28, 2014

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DILLINGHAM, AK – The United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB) welcomed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement that it would begin initiating Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery in Bristol Bay, Alaska. By invoking Section 404(c) to protect Bristol Bay, EPA has taken the first step toward fulfilling its trust responsibility to Bristol Bay's Tribes and the subsistence way of life.

Today's announcement follows the recent publication of the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, which found that mining on the scale of Pebble would destroy 5,350 acres of wetlands, ponds, and lakes in the Bristol Bay region, as well as up to 94 miles of salmon spawning and rearing streams, which are the cradle for the Bristol Bay subsistence and commercial fisheries. The Watershed Assessment further found that if "salmon quality or quantity was (or perceived to be) adversely affected, the nutritional, social, and spiritual health of Alaska Natives would decline."

Robert Heyano, Chairman of UTBB, made the following statement regarding EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy's announcement on Section 404(c):

"EPA's decision to protect Bristol Bay through the Clean Water Act is one of historical importance. There is no other place in the entire world like Bristol Bay. The salmon that return to our watershed every year have sustained our Tribes since time immemorial, while also providing our friends and neighbors with the commercial and sport harvesting opportunities that guarantee our region's economy remains strong. The Bristol Bay salmon fishery is a national treasure. UTBB looks forward to working directly with EPA to ensure that this treasure is protected forever."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2014

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Bishop David (Mahaffey), 907-607-0224

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Alaskan Religious Leaders Applaud Initial Steps to Protect Alaskan Native Culture, Bristol Bay

Anchorage – Alaska Religious leaders applauded the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) decision to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to review large scale development such as the proposed Pebble Mine. The decision comes two days after Bishop David of the Orthodox Church in Alaska and Bishop Shelley Wickstrom of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America along with Creation Justice Ministries met with the EPA to urge for protection for Bristol Bay.

Bishop David, the recently installed head of the Alaska Synod of the Orthodox Diocese stated:

“In 2011, 40,000 Orthodox Christians in Alaska passed a resolution highlighting the sacred nature of the waters in Bristol Bay and called for the rejection of any ‘development that would threaten the viability, purity, and sanctity of the natural world.’ EPA’s recent Watershed Assessment reveals the irreparable damage the proposed Pebble Mine would bring to Bristol Bay and their announcement today is the next step in the process to ensure protection for this piece of God’s creation and the communities that depend on the Bay.”

“Having spent seven years in Dillingham for my first pastoral call, I am intimately aware of the beauty, fragile nature, and magnificence of the Bristol Bay region” noted Rev. Shelley Wickstrom, Bishop of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. “Bristol Bay is unlike any other place on Earth – supporting a centuries old Native Alaskan culture, the world’s largest wild salmon fishery, and a vibrant part of God’s creation that remind us all that our call to serve as stewards is a moral and spiritual call. Today, EPA is acknowledging the moral and spiritual importance of protecting Bristol Bay.”

EPA’s announcement marks the beginning of a detailed process that will be used to determine if the proposed Pebble Mine can co-exist with the creation and communities in and around Bristol Bay. Last month, EPA released its Watershed Assessment of Bristol Bay, noting that the proposed Pebble Mine would cause irreversible damage to the Bristol Bay watershed and its salmon population.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EPA Takes Next Step Necessary to Protect Bristol Bay

NRDC: Action "puts EPA's eyes on the prize . . . to protect this national treasure"

WASHINGTON (February 28, 2014) - Responding to public demand to protect Bristol Bay in southwest Alaska from the proposed Pebble Mine, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today is expected to take the first step in a process under the federal Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay from large-scale mining in the region. Called section 404(c), the provision allows the agency to "prohibit, restrict, or withdraw" an area at risk of "unacceptable adverse effects" on water, fisheries, wildlife, or recreation resources.

Joel Reynolds, Western Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council, made the following statement:

"This puts EPA's eyes on the prize. Bristol Bay is the richest salmon habitat in the world. We can't let Pebble Mine put that at risk. EPA has the tools to protect this national treasure for the people and wildlife that depend on it.

The science is sound, EPA's legal authority is clear, and the people of Bristol Bay have demanded protection. It's time to say no to Pebble Mine."

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The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Chicago; Bozeman, Montana; and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC.